

Madame/ Mister Chair and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about maintaining the MMC as it currently stands. My name is Justin Jennings and I am currently the Principal of Holland High School and a MASSP Board Member.

I have a unique perspective as a principal and how I have seen success of the MMC in its current state, having been a teacher and principal in a rural, suburban and urban school setting I have plenty of experience in every facet of the MMC.

The MMC brings 3 important factors to the forefront that must take place in all educational settings. Those factors are consistency, stability and rigor.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum is essential as it allows students to build skills and competencies in a variety of frameworks, including rigorous career-technical programs. The Intermediate School Districts who offer CTE programs have adopted curriculum to include credit for some MMC requirements in areas such as manufacturing, health care and information technology just to name a few. In Holland we are working with the Herman Miller, a large office furniture manufacturer, to connect college and career readiness with real life job and careers. This was brought about from a talk with local business and educational leaders regarding how business leaders could help the public schools maintain a rigorous curriculum while assisting in preparing our students to be college or career ready.

It is also essential to retain world language instruction that educational leaders encourage be taught in elementary and middle school. Currently at Holland High School we offer world languages starting in the 6th grade. Languages taken district wide include Latin, Spanish, French and American Sign. Language requirements has allowed our students to dual-enroll in colleges and universities during there Junior and Senior years, while the MMC also afford our CTE students to take courses in CTE, Job Shadow and participate in internships.

As a principal in an urban high school the rigor of the MMC was evident as to improving the graduation rate as well as raising test scores. It afforded us a road map for which staff and students understood the expectations and rose to the occasion. In my time as an urban school principal our MME and ACT score increased every year, In my last year we had the highest percentage of growth across Western Michigan due to the focus of the MMC.

Robert Marzano states nothing takes the place of a “guaranteed and viable curriculum”. When it comes to impact on student achievement, to change or modify the MMC will be an injustice to all students whether rural, urban or suburban.